

Remarks

In this Preliminary Amendment, Applicants have cancelled claims **1, 31, 44, and 45**. Applicants have amended claims **2,4,5,6,7,8,9,11,12,13,14,15,16, 18,21,23,25,27,30,32,33,34,35,36,38,39,40,46,47 and 48**. Applicants have added new claims **50-65**. Applicants have made minor changes to the Specification, and have submitted Formal Drawings to replace the informal drawings.

The Specification and Drawings fully support and teach all of the elements and limitations of the amended and new claims, and changes to the Specification. No new subject matter has been added.

Conclusion

Applicants request examination of the amended application, and request expeditious processing to issuance. Allowance of this amended application is solicited.

The Office is hereby authorized to charge the necessary fees for additional claims, as appropriate, to Deposit Account # 19-0131.

Respectfully submitted,

 12/17/01

Robert D. Watson
Agent for Applicants
Reg. No. 45,604
Ph: (505) 845-3139
Fax: (505) 844-1418
e-mail: rdwatso@sandia.gov
Sandia National Laboratories
P.O. Box 5800 MS-0161
Albuquerque, NM 87185-0161

Certificate of Mailing under 37 CFR 1.8

I hereby certify that this correspondence and documents referred to herein were deposited with the United States Post Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Assistant Commissioner of Patents, Box Non-Fee Amendment, Washington, D.C. 20231 on the date shown below.

Date: 12/18/01 By: Mary Loukota

Clean Copy of Amended Claims

2. The method of claim 9, wherein adding magnesium hydroxide to the water comprises adding magnesium oxide, which converts to magnesium hydroxide upon contact with the water.
3. The method of claim 2, wherein the magnesium oxide comprises reactive magnesium oxide.
4. The method of claim 9, wherein a sufficient amount of magnesium hydroxide is added to the water to reduce the concentration of arsenic to below an acceptable level of 10 ppb.
5. The method of claim 4, wherein a sufficient amount of magnesium hydroxide is added to the water to reduce the concentration of arsenic to below an acceptable level of 2 ppb.
6. The method of claim 9, wherein the water comprises wastewater from an industrial process.
7. The method of claim 9, wherein the water comprises potable water.
8. The method of claim 9, wherein the magnesium hydroxide is used in a form selected from the group consisting of a suspension, a slurry, a powder, and a particulate.

9. A method of reducing the concentration of arsenic in water to below an acceptable level, comprising:
- adding magnesium hydroxide to the water;
 - adsorbing arsenic on the magnesium hydroxide; and
 - separating and removing from the water the magnesium hydroxide with adsorbed arsenic, thereby reducing the concentration of arsenic in the water to below the acceptable level;
- wherein the magnesium hydroxide has a median particle size less than 3 microns.
10. The method of claim 9, wherein the magnesium hydroxide has a median particle size of 0.5-1 microns.
11. The method of claim 9, wherein the magnesium hydroxide is used in the form of a powder having a surface area of 7-13 m²/gram.
12. A method of reducing the concentration of arsenic in a flowing stream of water to below an acceptable level, comprising:
- adding magnesium hydroxide to the water;
 - adsorbing arsenic on the magnesium hydroxide; and
 - separating and removing from the water the magnesium hydroxide with adsorbed arsenic, thereby reducing the concentration of arsenic in the water to below the acceptable level;
- wherein the step of adding magnesium hydroxide to the water comprises using a injector selected from the group consisting of a powder injector and a suspension injector to inject the magnesium hydroxide into a flowing stream of the water.

13. A method of reducing the concentration of arsenic in water to below an acceptable level, comprising:

adding magnesium hydroxide to the water;
adsorbing arsenic on the magnesium hydroxide; and
separating and removing from the water the magnesium hydroxide with adsorbed arsenic, thereby reducing the concentration of arsenic in the water to below the acceptable level;

wherein the step of adsorbing arsenic on the magnesium hydroxide comprises maintaining the magnesium hydroxide in contact with the arsenic contaminated water for less than approximately one hour.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein the step of adsorbing arsenic on the magnesium hydroxide comprises maintaining the magnesium hydroxide in contact with the arsenic contaminated water for less than approximately thirty minutes.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein the step of adsorbing arsenic on the magnesium hydroxide comprises maintaining the magnesium hydroxide in contact with the arsenic contaminated water for approximately 2 minutes.

16. The method of claim 13, wherein the step of adsorbing arsenic on the magnesium hydroxide comprises stirring the mixture of water and magnesium hydroxide to keep the magnesium hydroxide in suspension for a period of time sufficient to adsorb a sufficient amount of arsenic.

17. The method of claim 2, wherein adding magnesium hydroxide to the water comprises adding 0.001-10 grams of MgO to each liter of water to be treated.

18. The method of claim 9, wherein adding magnesium hydroxide to the water comprises adding 0.001-10 grams of $\text{Mg}(\text{OH})_2$ to each liter of water to be treated.

19. The method of claim 17, wherein adding magnesium hydroxide to the water comprises adding 0.1-0.5 grams of MgO to each liter of water to be treated.

20. The method of claim 18, wherein adding magnesium hydroxide to the water comprises adding 0.1-0.5 grams of $\text{Mg}(\text{OH})_2$ to each liter of water to be treated.

21. A method of reducing the concentration of arsenic in water to below an acceptable level, comprising:

adding magnesium hydroxide to the water;

adsorbing arsenic on the magnesium hydroxide; and

separating and removing from the water the magnesium hydroxide with adsorbed arsenic, thereby reducing the concentration of arsenic in the water to below the acceptable level;

wherein separating the magnesium hydroxide with adsorbed arsenic from the water comprises using a separation method selected from the group consisting of settling, skimming, vacuuming, draining, dissolved air flotation, vortex separating, centrifuging, and a combination of two or more of the foregoing.

22. The method of claim 21, wherein the separation method comprises settling using a flocculating agent to aid the settling process.

23. A method of reducing the concentration of arsenic in water to below an acceptable level, comprising:

adding magnesium hydroxide to the water;

adsorbing arsenic on the magnesium hydroxide; and

separating and removing from the water the magnesium hydroxide with adsorbed arsenic, thereby reducing the concentration of arsenic in the water to below the acceptable level;

wherein the magnesium hydroxide is disposed on the surface of a carrier particle.

24. The method of claim 23, wherein the carrier particle is lighter than water.

25. The method of claim 24, wherein the carrier particle comprises a particle selected from the group consisting of a plastic microsphere and a polystyrene microsphere.

26. The method of claim 23, wherein the carrier particle is heavier than water.

27. The method of claim 26, wherein the carrier particle comprises a particle selected from the group consisting of a sand particle and a glass microsphere.

28. The method of claim 23, wherein the carrier particle is magnetic.

29. The method of claim 28, further comprising magnetically separating the magnetic carrier particle from the water.

30. The method of claim 9, further comprising adjusting the pH of the water after separating and removing the magnesium hydroxide with adsorbed arsenic from the water.

32. A method of reducing the concentration of arsenic in water to below an acceptable level, wherein the water comprises carbonate; the method comprising:
- adding magnesium hydroxide to the water;
 - adsorbing arsenic on the magnesium hydroxide; and
 - separating and removing from the water the magnesium hydroxide with adsorbed arsenic, thereby reducing the concentration of arsenic in the water to below the acceptable level;
- wherein the $\text{Mg}(\text{OH})_2$ is permitted to adsorb arsenic for a period of time;
- wherein the period of time is sufficiently long to allow a sufficient amount of the arsenic to adsorb to $\text{Mg}(\text{OH})_2$; and
- wherein the period of time is sufficiently short to prevent significant release of the arsenic from the $\text{Mg}(\text{OH})_2$ with adsorbed arsenic, due to conversion of $\text{Mg}(\text{OH})_2$ to MgCO_3 by the carbonate in the water.
33. The method of claim 32, wherein the step of adding magnesium hydroxide to the water is performed in association with a water softening process that removes carbonate from the water by adding a compound that causes precipitation of CaCO_3 from the water.
34. The method of claim 32, wherein the step of adsorbing arsenic on the magnesium hydroxide comprises increasing the pH level to decrease the rate of formation of MgCO_3 .
35. The method of claim 32, further comprising the step of adding an inhibitor to inhibit conversion of magnesium hydroxide to magnesium carbonate.
36. The method of claim 35, wherein the inhibitor comprises a reagent selected from the group consisting of CaO and NaOH .
37. The method of claim 35, wherein the inhibitor increases the pH of the water.

38. A method of reducing the concentration of arsenic in water to below an acceptable level, comprising:

adding magnesium hydroxide to the water;

adsorbing arsenic on the magnesium hydroxide; and

separating and removing from the water the magnesium hydroxide with adsorbed arsenic, thereby reducing the concentration of arsenic in the water to below the acceptable level;

wherein the step of adding magnesium hydroxide to the water further comprises:

considering the rate of arsenic adsorption to magnesium hydroxide;

considering the rate of loss of magnesium hydroxide due to conversion of magnesium hydroxide to magnesium carbonate; and

considering the rate of arsenic release resulting from said conversion of magnesium hydroxide to magnesium carbonate.

39. A continuous process for reducing the concentration of arsenic in water to below an acceptable level and for recycling magnesium, comprising:

- a) adding magnesium hydroxide to the water;
- b) adsorbing arsenic on the magnesium hydroxide;
- c) separating and removing from the water the magnesium hydroxide with adsorbed arsenic, thereby reducing the concentration of arsenic in the water to below the acceptable level;
- d) making an aqueous solution comprising the magnesium hydroxide with adsorbed arsenic removed in step c);
- e) converting the magnesium hydroxide with adsorbed arsenic to magnesium carbonate, whereupon free arsenic is released into the solution;
- f) separating and removing the magnesium carbonate from the solution;
- g) heating the magnesium carbonate to produce carbon dioxide and purified magnesium oxide; and
- h) providing the purified magnesium oxide produced in step g) to step a), whereby the magnesium is recycled.

40. The method of claim 39, wherein converting the magnesium hydroxide to magnesium carbonate in step e) comprises exposing the magnesium hydroxide with adsorbed arsenic to an aqueous solution comprising a reagent selected from the group consisting of sodium carbonate, sodium bicarbonate, potassium carbonate and potassium bicarbonate.

41. The method of claim 39, wherein the magnesium carbonate is heated in step g) to at least about 400 C.

42. The method of claim 39, further comprising converting the produced magnesium oxide to a powder of a desired size in-between step g) and h).

43. The method of claim 39, further comprising, after step e), removing arsenic from the solution comprising free arsenic, whereby purified arsenic is produced.

46. A method of concentrating arsenic from a sample of arsenic contaminated water, comprising:

- a) adding magnesium hydroxide to a first sample of the arsenic contaminated water;
- b) adsorbing arsenic on the magnesium hydroxide;
- c) separating and removing from the first sample the magnesium hydroxide with adsorbed arsenic;
- d) adding the magnesium hydroxide with adsorbed arsenic removed in step c) to a second sample of water, wherein the volume of liquid in the second sample is substantially less than the volume of liquid in the first sample; and
- e) converting the magnesium hydroxide with adsorbed arsenic in the second sample to magnesium carbonate, whereupon free arsenic is released into solution; whereby the concentration of free arsenic in the second sample is concentrated relative to the first sample by the ratio of the volume of liquid in the first sample divided by the volume of liquid in the second sample.

47. The method of claim 46, wherein the ratio of the volume of liquid in the first sample divided by the volume of liquid in the second sample is greater than or equal to 10.

48. The method of claim 46, further comprising measuring the concentration of arsenic in the second sample, and then dividing by the ratio of the volume of liquid in the first sample divided by the volume of liquid in the second sample, to produce the true concentration of arsenic in the first sample.

49. The method of claim 46, wherein step e) comprises adding to the second sample a carbonate reagent selected from the group consisting of sodium carbonate, sodium bicarbonate, potassium carbonate and potassium bicarbonate.

50. The method of claim 12, wherein adding magnesium hydroxide to the water comprises adding magnesium oxide, which converts to magnesium hydroxide upon contact with the water.

51. The method of claim 13, wherein adding magnesium hydroxide to the water comprises adding magnesium oxide, which converts to magnesium hydroxide upon contact with the water.

52. The method of claim 21, wherein adding magnesium hydroxide to the water comprises adding magnesium oxide, which converts to magnesium hydroxide upon contact with the water.

53. The method of claim 23, wherein adding magnesium hydroxide to the water comprises adding magnesium oxide, which converts to magnesium hydroxide upon contact with the water.

54. The method of claim 32, wherein adding magnesium hydroxide to the water comprises adding magnesium oxide, which converts to magnesium hydroxide upon contact with the water.

55. The method of claim 38, wherein adding magnesium hydroxide to the water comprises adding magnesium oxide, which converts to magnesium hydroxide upon contact with the water.

56. The method of claim 39, wherein adding magnesium hydroxide to the water comprises adding magnesium oxide, which converts to magnesium hydroxide upon contact with the water.

57. The method of claim 46, wherein adding magnesium hydroxide to the water comprises adding magnesium oxide, which converts to magnesium hydroxide upon contact with the water.

58. The method of claim 46, wherein the second sample of water comprises essentially no arsenic.

59. A method of concentrating arsenic from a sample of water contaminated with arsenic and at least one other impurity, comprising:

- a) adding magnesium hydroxide to a first sample of the contaminated water;
- b) adsorbing arsenic on the magnesium hydroxide;
- c) separating and removing from the first sample the magnesium hydroxide with adsorbed arsenic;
- d) adding the magnesium hydroxide with adsorbed arsenic removed in step c) to a second sample of water, wherein the volume of liquid in the second sample is substantially less than the volume of liquid in the first sample, and wherein the water in the second sample consists of essentially pure water without arsenic or other impurities; and
- e) converting the magnesium hydroxide with adsorbed arsenic in the second sample to magnesium carbonate;

whereupon free arsenic is released into solution;

whereby the concentration of free arsenic in the second sample is concentrated relative to the first sample by the ratio of the volume of liquid in the first sample divided by the volume of liquid in the second sample;

and further wherein the at least one impurity in the first sample is not transferred to the second sample.

60. The method of claim 59, wherein the ratio of the volume of liquid in the first sample divided by the volume of liquid in the second sample is greater than or equal to 10.

61. The method of claim 59, further comprising measuring the concentration of arsenic in the second sample, and then dividing by the ratio of the volume of liquid in the first sample divided by the volume of liquid in the second sample, to produce the true concentration of arsenic in the first sample.

62. The method of claim 59, wherein step e) comprises adding to the second sample a carbonate reagent selected from the group consisting of sodium carbonate, sodium bicarbonate, potassium carbonate and potassium bicarbonate.

63. The method of claim 59, wherein the water in the second sample of water is distilled water.

64. The method of claim 59, wherein adding magnesium hydroxide to the water comprises adding magnesium oxide, which converts to magnesium hydroxide upon contact with the water.

65. The method of claim 61, wherein measuring the concentration of arsenic in the second sample comprises performing ion-coupled plasma mass spectrometry on the second sample.